

*Washington, DC* - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today announced that the House of Representatives will hold a vote this Tuesday, March 16 or Wednesday, March 17 on a bill he introduced last year that would authorize the National Park Service (NPS) to conduct a study on whether the Hudson River Valley should become a unit of the National Park system.

"I am pleased that this bill passed through the House Natural Resources Committee with ease, and I am optimistic that it will find overwhelming support when the House takes it up later this week," Hinchey said. "Passage of this bill and the subsequent study would position the Hudson River Valley to gain the full attention of the National Park Service for all of the significant and substantial historic contributions the region has made to the development of the United States as well as for the area's pristine natural beauty. Such a designation would provide the Hudson River Valley with an elevated national stature and access to additional federal funding that otherwise would not be available."

The scheduled vote on Hinchey's bill, H.R. 4003 -- the Hudson River Valley Special Resource Study Act, follows a successful vote in committee on February 24. A hearing was held on January 21 by the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands.

In order for the Hudson River Valley to become part of the National Park System, a congressionally-authorized NPS study must be conducted. Hinchey's legislation would authorize such a study from Fort Edward in Washington County down through Westchester County. If the NPS's study finds that the Hudson River Valley would be a good fit as part of the National Park System then subsequent legislation would be needed to make that designation. Hinchey said he would immediately introduce the necessary legislation.

Hinchey's bill outlines specific guidelines to ensure that the NPS study recognizes the realities of the Hudson River Valley. These guidelines require the NPS to closely examine park unit models, in particular national river and recreation areas, as well as other landscape protection models, that: encompass large areas of non-federal lands within their designated boundaries; foster public and private collaborative arrangements for achieving NPS objectives, and protect and respect the rights of private land owners. No forced land acquisition activities would be permitted.

Hinchey has long sought greater recognition, protection, and resources for the Hudson River Valley. As a member of the New York State Assembly, Hinchey authored the legislation that led to the creation of the Hudson River Valley Greenway and in Congress he authored legislation that led to the designation of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, which provides technical assistance to local communities or local managers to assist them in managing natural and historic sites of national importance.